2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

wives will be fertile. Abortion is said to be very rare and practised only by unmarried girls. Though the men of the kraal may hope that monorchids and babies born with defects and deformities will not survive, they do not kill them or let them die. The proper care and nurture of children is the concern of the whole family and household, and from the moment of birth care is taken to isolate the child from any contact which might be injurious to it. Even the father keeps away from the mother's hut for the first few days lest he inadvertently cause it some misfortune. The prohibition on coitus between parents till the child is weaned is seldom infringed, although it imposes long abstinence, for the child is suckled till he can digest solid food and can toddle about homestead and camp by himself. Artificial aids to weaning are rarely necessary, infants passing slowly from the breast to cow- and goat-milk, though sometimes they are sent to their maternal grandparents for some weeks to make the break. Children have first claim in the allocation of milk from the herd, and if there is a shortage it is the adults, and not they, who go without.

The care of small children falls naturally to the mother, and it is she who feeds and bathes them and attends to their other wants. But the father also takes an interest in his infant children, and one often sees a man nursing his child while the mother is engaged in the tasks of the home. Nuer fathers are proud of their children and give much time to them, petting and spoiling them, giving them titbits, playing with them, and teaching them to talk; and the children are often in the byres with the men. The affection of children for their fathers is very striking in Nuerland. I have never seen a man beat his child or lose his temper with him, however aggravating he might be. When a father speaks crossly to his child, as he does if, let us say, the child goes to the edge of a river or among the cattle, where he may be injured, it is evident that the child is not afraid of his loud words and obeys from affection rather than fear. In his first years a child is corrected by his mother and elder brothers and sisters, who may give him a few strokes with a grass switch if he is naughty.

Daughters grow up under the direction of their mothers. Mother and elder sisters give a girl training in household tasks and what moral advice and worldly wisdom they care to impart. The father takes little interest in the affairs of his daughters. His chief concern with them is to ensure that they are well married.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
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she may call herself 'a woman who has just given birth to a child' for months afterwards, and try to solicit privileges on that account. 846

Nuer mothers love their babies and try to do all they can in their limited way for them. Whatever the child may lack, it does not lack its mother's love while she is living. But if the mother dies life is a different thing for the child that is left. A new-born baby demands food, and the artificial feeding of babies is an art entirely unknown to the Nuer. What to do with the small piece of humanity is a serious proposition. 854

Rumour says that they may bury the new-born baby with the dead mother, arguing that it will die soon anyhow, but I do not know of any authentic case where the live child has been buried. It is, however, very true that the motherless baby soon follows its mother. Five motherless infants have been brought to the mission at Nasser, as the people know that the art of the artificial feeding of infants is not unknown there. Two of these babies died, while three have lived so far. 847 165

TWINS

Twins are not uncommon, but are usually a cause of distress to their parents, for they are sure that one will die—and it usually does fail to survive. The mother always nurses one child at one breast and the second child at the other breast, and thus divides the supply of food as evenly as she can between them. 845 [853]

When a man is the father of twins, his brother will sacrifice a sheep before he eats with him so that no harm may come to the babies.

The Nuer has a superstition in regard to the burial of new-born twins. Rumour says that they prefer to tie the hands together and hang them up in a tree rather than 766